

# Corui Chronicle

*Journal of the American Society of Crows and Ravens Vol. XXIII, No. 2, 2008(C.E.)*

## ELECTION SPECIAL

### ASCAR's Guide for picking through political thicket



#### VLADIMIR ILYICH LENIN

*Dec. 10, 1906*

"When a liberal is abused he says, 'Thank God they didn't beat me.' When he is beaten he thanks God they didn't kill him. When he is killed he will thank God that his immortal soul has been delivered from the mortal clay."

#### BENJAMIN DISRAELI

*1844*

"Conservatism discards Prescription, shrinks from Principle, disavows Progress... It offers no redress for the present and makes no preparation for the future."

#### KARL HESS

*Goldwater strategist, circa 1970*

"Conservatives believe they have to make people get out of bed and go to work. Liberals believe they must tell people what to do once they get to work."

#### W.S. GILBERT

*1882*

"That every boy and every gal,  
That's born into the world  
alive,  
Is either a little Liberal,  
Or else a little Conservative."

All or part of which may still be true but in recent times distinctions between Liberals and Conservatives have blurred. Once Conservatives were individuals in comfortable circumstances or least ones who had beneath them classes which it was politically correct to despise and denigrate. They believed that any change would most probably be for the worse and therefore were vigorously anti-change. For material and/or psychic reasons Liberals were very dissatisfied with what was and had been. They believed that changing economic, social and political rules would improve their lot

and that of lots of others. Therefore they were vigorously pro-change.

However in the here and now identification is not so simple. For example, Conservatives contend that unless we drastically change immigration policies we will be catastrophically overwhelmed and impoverished by terrestrial aliens, be required to celebrate holidays and learn languages which are foreign to us. Liberals contend that changes in immigration policy will threaten cherished American liberties, create economic havoc and demonstrate a contempt for diversity which keeps the national heart beating. Or: Conservatives who were

once mocked by Liberals as heads-in-the sand isolationists now argue that it is profitable and moral for us to go into the far corners of the world to micro-manage the affairs of overly backward or belligerent peoples. Liberals, who Conservatives formerly scorned as naïve One Worlders, claim we will be richer, happier and more respected if we stay home and take care of our own hospitals, schools and bridges, and thugs.

To add to the confusion: Conservatives and Liberals, despite still having very different agendas for us, now adaptively look, dress and speak

*Continued on page 2*

## PolSpeak Glossary

Increasingly the purpose of political discourse is to confuse and camouflage rather than to clarify. To this end many code words and phrases, euphemisms and nonsequiturs are intentionally employed. The following is a glossary of common polspeak terms whose meaning is quite

different than their standard English one.

**AMNESTY:** A policy, which humanely expands the pool of cheap labor; or, a policy, which corrupts our language, schools and traditions by wrongfully rewarding millions of undeserving foreign criminals.

**BASE:** A group, which if fed enough rhetorical red meat (qv) will support a politician no matter how dumb, deceitful or venial she or he may otherwise be.

**CHARACTER ASSASSINATION:** Heartlessly calling attention to little bitty past indiscretions (qv) of a good person on your

side; doing so to opponents is known as exposing serious or alarming character flaws.

**CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM:** Revisions to the Constitution required because the Founding Fathers failed to grant sufficient privileges to

*Continued on page 3*

## ELECTION SPECIAL *continued*

# Distinguishing Liberals & Conservatives



much alike. In short they have intentionally and superficially made themselves hard to tell apart. Therefore as a reader service the Chronicle offers the following unadulterated

– but seldom openly confessed – Conservative and Liberal beliefs and attitudes. Readers can determine those with which they most agree or disagree and then match them to a particular

candidate or party. In this way one can be assured of supporting genuine Conservatives or Liberals no matter what they are saying or how they behave during the campaign.



*We must stay the course, remain willing  
To continue with all the killing  
So that the survivors who are still able  
Can create a government which is stable.*

*It is well to be leery  
Of the Domino Theory  
Which seems to make us go off and do  
In places like – or worse than – Timbuktu*



*We cannot tell you who, why or what is  
expected.  
But trust us. Secrecy has to be respected  
Because if the facts all were to be had  
You might think we'd lied to hide something  
bad.*



*Privacy Laws  
Have some flaws.  
They allow people Cheney likes  
Slyly to plot oil price hikes.*



*Declare Victory now and get out  
Come right home and start thinking about  
Trickling down at least some of our wealth  
To those who lack homes, heat and good  
health.*



*To occupy the highest moral ground  
Where only the really pious are to be found  
It is wise and expedient  
To castigate the deviants.*

*Rubba, rubba dub  
Three men in a tub.  
These days one hopes they are not great fools  
Who disobey all the safe sex rules.*

*Go out and buy a lot of stuff.  
That we think will be enough  
To confound all the empires evil  
**And** protect against social upheaval.*

*Despite the malarkey  
Of the oligarchy  
Corporate ethics belongs on that list  
Of things we very much doubt truly exist.*

*It is a despicable false canard  
Started by some socialistic retard,  
That behind every fortune there is a crime.  
Often in truth it was only a bit of slime.*

*It now makes a good bit of sense  
To ask **if** a long border fence  
Will serve to keep some of them on the outs  
Or just turn us into xenophobic louts?*

*The fair and balanced are suspicious of the  
tube.*

*All they find there, except on Fox, is some  
pinko boob  
Dissemination in most egregious error  
More bleak news about our war on terror.*

*It is long gone but in the Age of Reason  
Critical thinking was always in season.  
Now True Believers scorn rational  
explanation  
As an elitist form of discrimination*

# POL SPEAK GLOSSARY *continued*

good citizens or too many to bad citizens.

**CYNIC:** Intellectual Peeping Toms who take perverse pleasure in gawking at naked realities.

**DETAILS:** Awkward factual matters, which may be discussed and/or modified later in private.

**ELITISTS:** Formerly the crème de crème of society. Now despised as prissy fools who act like they are better than you and may be.

**FAIR AND BALANCED:** News reports spun just as you want them to be; often based on one's own press releases.

**FLIP FLOP:** To change a previously held opinion or position. Opponents who do so show lack of principle, weakness of mind, morals and memory.

**GENDER EQUITY:** Gives females the opportunity to be as greedy, rude and self righteous as male chauvinist pigs.

**HARSH REALITY:** Makes plans and proposals of opponents unworkable; exposes them as empty promises or only wishful thoughts.

**IDEOLOGUES:** Insist on the truth of ideas you have not thought about but know to be false and find deeply disturbing.

**INDISCRETIONS:** Minor (often youthful and/or innocent)

errors of judgment made by your candidate involving such things as adultery, bribery, embezzlement, fraud, nepotism, perjury or perversions.

**JUDICIAL ACTIVISTS:** Judges who make decisions, which you and your party do not like.

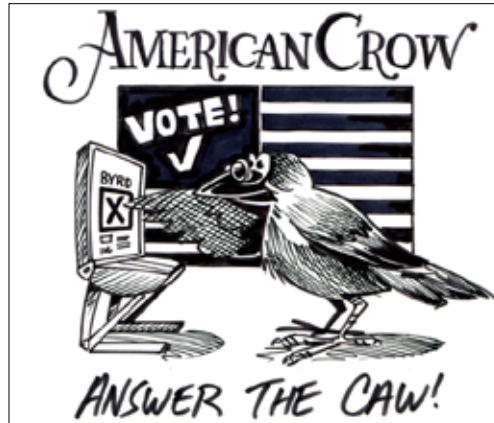
**KNEE-JERK:** Repeated, ridiculous response made by mindless opponents who refuse to flip flop (qv).

**LOFTY GOALS:** Reflect one's soaring vision of the future or, the inability of opponents to face harsh reality (qv).

**LOBBYISTS:** Unsavory minions of Special Interests (qv) who – unlike one's own Trusted Advisers – unduly influence and probably bribe weak, greedy public officials.

**MILITIA:** Public spirited groups of avocational soldiers; or, cells of apprentice domestic terrorists.

**NEGATIVE CAMPAIGNING:** A tactic commonly employed by candidates who hope to convince voters that they are the lesser of two or more evils.



Sketch by Jim Haynes, #254, Silver Springs, Md.

**OBSTRUCTIONS:** Selfishly vote and speak out against policies and decisions made by responsible, objective leaders.

**PARTY LINE:** Malicious nonsense parroted by another party.

**QUIBBLING:** A tactic by obstructionists (qv) to spoil policies and decisions by pointing out logical absurdities, structural flaws and harsh realities (qv).

**RED MEAT:** Bloody revelations, which must regularly be fed to the base (qv) to energize it.

**SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS:** Groups whose selfish concerns are repugnant to disinterested groups.

**TOLERANCE:** A virtue: making allowances for the flaws of otherwise good people of the

right persuasion. A vice: making allowances for very bad, threatening or wrong people.

**TRADITIONAL VALUES:** Inherited or long standing habits, opinions and taboos which everyone should be required to make their own.

**URGENT:** As in problems which should be faced but not just now.

**VICIOUS:** Unexpectedly effective criticism of or attacks on their competence and character which candidates find difficult to ignore or deny.

**WELFARE:** A desirable state, which must be vigilantly guarded by those who enjoy good fortune prospects and health; or, a wrong-headed state policy, which corrupts the un-serving poor by unfairly enriching them.

**XENOPHOBIA:** An affliction caused by geographical isolation, cultural in-breeding and perhaps genetics since it now frequently occurs among those whose ancestors were Know Nothings.

**YOU'RE WORSE:** Popular, often effective response to vicious (qv) criticism and attacks.

**ZEALOT:** A supporter of a rival candidate or party who is obsessively concerned with demented ideas and causes.

*The Corvi Chronicle* is published irregularly by corvi who have an interest in or need for doing so for members of The American Society of Crows and Ravens and others. There is no subscription fee, but it is customary and seemly to send contributions to pay for production and mailing. There is a direct connection between contributions, the size of the Chronicle and its frequency of distribution. Those who do not choose to contribute will continue to receive the Chronicle and enjoy all membership privileges. However, they will no doubt suffer a loss of self-esteem and may occasionally be mocked by other corvis.

Members are reminded to make new corvi by duplicating and passing along issues of the Chronicle.

ASCAR has a home page or chat room on the Internet:

<http://www.ascaronline.org/>

Editor..... Corvi #67  
Art Directors .... Corvi #7, #9, #15 #24 and #1499  
The Board .... Known only to themselves

The Chronicle accepts articles and manuscripts of reasonable length on any topic acknowledged by The Board, news clippings and general correspondence. Unused material will be returned in good time to the authors. Commentary (insightful, indignant or otherwise) should be addressed to:

ASCAR / CORVI CHRONICLE  
KAW RIVER VALLEY ROOST  
BOX 1423  
LAWRENCE KS 66044-8423

## AGRICULTURAL HISTORY

# Cache crop

Joshua Klein has produced an entertaining internet video ([www.TED.com](http://www.TED.com)) about his successful efforts to induce crows in his vicinity to put coins – which he supplies – into a vending machine-like contraption that then spills out peanuts. This does not greatly advance our appreciation of the cognitive abilities of crows since there are many reports of their behaviors which seemingly involve as much or more general intelligence, decision-making and memory. (Lawrence Kilham once remarked that when they have need to crows probably can, and do, do a lot of things which would astonish us if we knew and understood them.) Nevertheless the ingenuity and patience required to motivate free ranging crows to use a vending machine is quite impressive.

Klein includes several conventional ecological homilies to the effect that there should be more inter-specific learning and cooperation. In fact this has been going on between us, crows and ravens throughout what we think of as the historic era. They, for example, have figured out that people have created urban and suburban environments which for them are far safer (fewer owls and gunners), richer (in fast food droppings and such) and better lighted than are gloomy rural and wilderness areas. On the other hand they have given us subject material for thousands of myths and legends. Also as some paleohistorians have suggested they may have given us the idea for agriculture. Whether the latter is a good or bad thing is a matter of continuing dispute.



This conceit runs as follows: Corvids cache things in crevices, under leaves, in holes in the ground. Included among things they cache are seeds. Often the corvid who made it did not need or feel inclined to return to the cache and if it contained seeds they would eventually germinate. After a long time some people living in what is now Iraq picked up on this. One of them had a eureka flash and said if we did that, pretty soon we'd have a lot of plants growing right here which are just like the ones the seeds came from; maybe we can find some that will turn into wheat and oats, melons and so on and so on. This explanation is too simple and too homocentric.

A better one is this: Because of their caching habits crows came to understand the basic principles of agriculture long before people did. They saw that it would have some benefits. If they seeded a large field, they might eat better and oftener, work less at hunting and gathering, be able to spend more quality time with their families and otherwise socializing. But they also understood the disadvantages. Seeding a field struck them as being hard, dirty, undignified work. Also it would oblige them to stay in one place

for months on end and cut back on their exploration and travel time. So initially corvids put aside the idea of agriculture as an interesting but impractical one. However, eventually various crows in various parts of the world had their own eureka moment.

Crows have long been contemptuous of the abilities and behaviors of people but nevertheless have kept them under close observation.

This is partly because of curiosity about our odd ways but also because they are constantly looking for new ways to exploit us and our works. Finally various crows in various parts concluded that while agriculture was beneath their kind they might be able to get people – who if trashy were at least energetic – to do it. Making a great show of themselves to call attention to their works, corvids began planting the seeds of edible plants close to the caves, camps and huts of people. When the seeds sprouted they came back and made more show of themselves. After many generations the eureka Iraqi caught on and invented, so he or she claimed, agriculture. Ever since people have engaged in stoop labor the fruits of which (along with grains and some vegetables) corvids continue to enjoy.

All available records indicate that there are now many more corvids and people than there were in pre-agricultural times. However, beyond that the longer-term consequences of this inter-specific trans-action remain, of course, to be determined.

ASCAR now numbers — so think some who enjoy counting things — about 900 members. Alphabetically and in terms of interests and attitudes members range — an expression — from academics to Zoroastrians. But only the Editor and an associate minion know who and where they all are. This is in keeping with the Corvi Privacy Act that forbids

those who know from talking about or to other corvis or using their names and addresses in the Chronicle without permission. The CPA is occasionally tested by purveyors of crow curios wanting access to mailing lists.

However, because many mem-

### Privacy act

bers have similar interests and have indicated a desire to make the acquaintance of others who share them, some thought has been given to adjusting the CPA to accommodate these wishes. Therefore anyone who would like to hear from other corvi should send along their name and address to

the editor. These will be published occasionally in the Chronicle. Names are not absolutely necessary — Corvi numbers will do — but addresses are. Obviously those who wish to remain known only to the editor and her associate minion should do nothing and will continue to enjoy the protection of CPA.





## THE TALK OF THE ROOST

### SAUNA

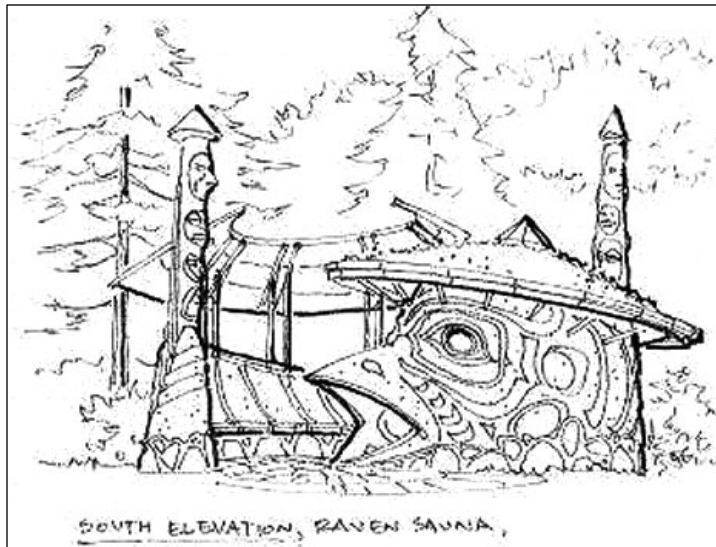
**L**aughing Raven in Portland, Ore., received permission from a neighboring artist, Vanessa Renwick, to print her sketch of a Raven Sauna.

Renwick, a filmmaker and installation artist, is also the founder and janitor of the Oregon Department of Kick Ass. <http://www.odoka.org> Her last name may mean: "From where the ravens roost."

Renwick designed the Raven Sauna in part to celebrate the 100-year history of her house. "I thought it would be nice to spend some time really focusing on giving some love back to it and its grounds. I've been so very fortunate to be living here for about 17 years now with my children and various friends. The first night I slept in it I awoke to a strange noise. It was a crow perched on a banister outside the window, tilting its head and cawing at me."

Her home and grounds are headquarters for ODKA, which Renwick described as a place for a community of artists, musicians and tramps to create, socialize, entertain and rest their weary bones.

Given Renwick's meaning, the artist said, "It seemed fitting to make this cob sauna in the image of a bird. We took inspiration from the NW Totem Poles



and Long Houses in Cascadia for the design. (I know that drawing looks like a chicken, but we will get a raven beak on it when we build it!)

"...We thought a sauna would be a welcome addition in our frequently damp climate. This sauna will be open for intermittent use by the community listed above as well as for occasional events. We're doing our part to keep the riffraff clean!"

The Raven Sauna is one of 22 projects that comprised Portland's Village Building Convergence 2008. VBC8 was a 10-day event from May 23 - June 1, in which neighborhoods worked to build shared public places that they have envisioned, designed, funded, and will maintain for themselves. VBC8 included hands-on education in permaculture design and construction, ecological

building, and public art. All projects were built through collaboration, community conversations and commitment of a neighborhood to strengthen itself. Special guests presented musical hootenannies throughout the sauna-building event.

The Village Building Convergence is part of Portland's City Repair Project Placemaking Program fulfilling City Repair's mission to educate and inspire communities and individuals to creatively transform the places where they live.

### WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE!

**W**e received a letter within a letter a while back from Corvi 611 who said s/he is a certified interpreter who tries to mimic bird calls but isn't sure how the birds interpret her calls.

Dear corviphiles, here is a post I sent to CoBirds, the listserv for the Colorado Field Ornithologists. I share it with you all, any info appreciated.

Dear CoBirders, I am used to ravens' highly varied calls, but today I heard some new sounds. There was a raven behind the Fruteria in Boulder, at Bluff and 29<sup>th</sup> streets, sitting on a fence that backs up to a trail and a small pond. I always notice ravens, but this one was

*Continued on next page*

## TALK<sub>continued</sub>

making sounds like a red winged black-bird, kind of a high-pitched trilling, so I really noticed. S/he was also doing bill clacks between trills. I started slowly walking that way, making some more regular raven calls, and the raven stayed put, continuing to make the trills, alternating with some dove-like coos, and a high, clear “caw” that was much higher and clearer than a crow. I was able to get to within about five feet of the raven who continued to make these sounds, bill clacks, and fluffing neck feathers. When I made some regular “kraaak” sounds as well as some of the higher caws, s/he looked at me several times with its head at a 90-degree angle, kind of like puppies when they are curious. It was very interesting. The raven wasn’t nervous or scared, and stayed for about five minutes doing these sounds, and looking at me like that, cocking his or her head side to side (unfortunately, I can’t make bill clacking sounds or the high trill). After about five minutes, the raven took off for a building to the south and another raven (who was silent). Could whoever forwarded another raven message I sent last year to Berndt Heinrich please do that again, as I am really curious about this: I will also send it to the American Society of Crows and Ravens, which, if anyone is interested, puts out a fine, irregular, non scientific journal for corvidophiles (which may or may not be a word) [www.ascaronline.org](http://www.ascaronline.org). Thanks

The post mentioned about last year was about an experience in Rocky Mountain National Park on the Christmas Count. There are not a lot of species that high in December, but, of course, there are ravens. I had been making raven calls trying to see if anyone would answer, and there were any ravens calling. Then a few hours later, I heard one far off. I began to make “kraaak” sounds, and the raven came closer, both of us making sounds. The raven came to where three of us were, then landed a short ways away and a little above, on a rock. S/he was jumping up and down on the rock, flapping wings and making the sounds. I was making the sounds but not jumping



### GROUNDSWELL

In March we received a postcard from Corvi 797 of Springfield, Mass., announcing a public art sculpture by Rachel Owens titled *Groundswell* that featured a bigger-than-life rubber raven in Socrates Sculpture Park Long Island City, Queens, New York. The exhibit ended March 2, 2008. *Groundswell*

reflected the site’s history as a landfill and illegal dumping ground as well as addressed failed cultural conditions, waste and underground infrastructure. Owens perched the raven on a sculpture of plumbing pipes jutting out of the ground to resemble a branched trunk that provided the raven’s perch, and also created a fountain that dumped

oil into a rusted oil drum. The jutting branched pipe and raven were encircled by discarded rubber tires and crumpled oil drums. The raven’s posture was described as dejected. Owens received a 2007 Socrates Emerging Artist Fellowship for this project. More information is online at [www.socratessculpturepark.org](http://www.socratessculpturepark.org)

up and down. It was very cool, although I really didn’t know what I was saying, and since I am an interpreter, that’s a little unusual. Finally, the raven flew off, and we were left wondering what it was about. Someone sent it to Berndt Heinrich, who said they do that when they are nervous or checking things out.

I hope I hadn’t said anything rude, I certainly didn’t mean to. Ravens are too cool and too interesting to be insulted, even unintentionally. Thanks for your publication, I forgot my corvid number, silly me.

### POLLY WANT A RESCUE

Corvi 51 of Gaithersburg, Md., sent the following clipped from the Sunday, April 29, 2008,

Washington Post

ANIMAL WATCH:

*A Murder of Crows, thwarted*

Among cases handled recently by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

Van Dorn St. S., unit block, April 9.

Animal control responded to a call about a parrot trapped in a tree and being attacked by crows. A couple who had seen the bird in distress chased the crows away. An animal control officer retrieved the parrot from the tree and took it to the shelter. The bird, a sun conure, a domesticated bird, had suffered head injuries and will be made available for adoption when it recovers.

## REACH WAY BACK DEPARTMENT

*Corvid Agonistes from another election year*

EDITOR'S NOTE: When the board agreed to run an election issue special, we reached back in our correspondence to find a 2004 column from The Clarion (Pa.) News submitted by Corvi 17, who in 2004 was living in Berlin, Germany. The Clarion News published the interview with Corvid Agonistes in September 2004, according to Tom DiStefano, Clarion News staff writer, who remains acquainted with this thoughtful crow. DiStefano noted he and another friend, a parrott fancier, often debate whether the American Crow or the African Grey parrott is the smarter bird. DiStefano kindly gave us permission to reprint his interview. While the crow's comments on the approaching presidential election four years ago are dated, the comments on humans remain fresh.

**From The Clarion (Pa.) News**  
September 2004

**THOUGHTS. WORDS. ACTIONS.**

**E**d Poe's Raven said "nevermore." But I'm haunted by a crow who says, "Thoughts. Words. Actions." I guess "irritated" is a better word than "haunted." Corvid Agonistes landed on my windowsill and said it again.

*"It's your Human presidential election," said the Crow. "It makes no sense."*

*"So what's it matter to Crows?"*

*"We Crows would rather ignore Humans. But we can't. We hate to admit it, but Humans are important to Crows."*

*"I suppose you want Crow suffrage now."*

*"Well, it might help. An intelligent electorate..."*

I cut him off. *"So Citizen Crow, how would you vote if you were allowed."*

*"I know how I would vote. But we Crows don't all agree. We talk about it a lot, but it's just talk. Thoughts. Words. Actions."*

*"There you go again," I said. "Besides, what do 'thoughts' have to do with an election?"*

*"Good question for you Humans. You don't seem to be thinking very well. And*

*words are way too important to you. So your actions aren't very good."*

*"Is that what all this 'thoughts, words, actions' stuff is all about? More Crow criticism of humans?"*

*"It's easy and fun to criticize you Humans," Corvid said. "But there's more. I'm talking about what's important. Words are more important than thoughts. And actions are way more important than words."*

*"So what's your point?"*

*"That is one of my points. The first two can be lies. It's easier to lie to yourself than anyone else. Humans being so lazy. It's easy to believe your own lies."*

*"And it's not hard to lie to others about what you're going to do. Or about what you did. And in political campaigns, about what the other guy did."*

*"But actions are another story. Because actions are real. Actions can't be lies. But they can be based on lies. That's when things get ugly."*

*"More insults. Now Humans are ugly," I said.*

*"Well, yes. No feathers. Big old nose sticking out. Ears like cabbage leaves. Heads all puffed out like a pumpkin. Stumbling around on two oversized legs. Arms good for nothing except for the thumbs on the end. Big lumps of fat..."*

*"Okay, enough."*

*"But I'm talking about ugly actions," Corvid continued.*

*"Like what?"*

*"Like war. Your President Bush. Didn't seem like he thought very hard about invading Iraq. Didn't have much of a long-range plan. Then Bush and his people said some things... Well, they weren't exactly accurate. So the war isn't going very well."*

*"So you Crows don't like Bush?" I asked.*

*"Liking Bush has little to do with it. We're more interested in how things affect Crows. Best ask the Crows in Iraq about the war."*

*"Then this Kerry fellow. Talks well. But he's a Human. What he says may or may not have much to do with what he does. Unknown quantity."*

*"So you're saying Humans should vote for Bush. After all, changing horses in the middle of a stream..."*

*"Might be a good idea," Corvid interrupted. "If the horse can't swim. And the stream is deeper than you thought."*

*"So Humans should vote for Kerry?"*

*"Didn't say that. Maybe they should. But I'm a Crow. What's good for Crows might not be what's good for Humans."*

*"You Humans should vote based on what's good for Humans. But you don't."*

*"We don't?"*

*"A lot of you don't. You get all worked up about stuff that isn't all that important. And you ignore what is important. Mostly, it's because you pay too much attention to words."*

*"Okay," I said. "I'll stop. Now you can shut up and go away."*

*"Not a chance. It was a lot of effort to learn to speak Human. I'm sure not going to stop now."*

*"I was afraid of that," I muttered.*

*"So when George the Bush says he wants freedom and liberty, you believe it. Instead, you should look at what his buddies are up to. Like John Ashcroft cutting back on civil liberties. Or Karl Rove having people arrested for criticizing the Bush at campaign rallies."*

*"Seems like the Bush is for freedom and democracy in Iraq, but not so much in America."*

I couldn't say I disagreed with the Crow, but I didn't want to encourage him. Of course, Corvid doesn't need much encouragement.

*"Well we're at war with terrorism," I countered.*

*"Can't blame you for that. And Bush made a good start. Gave a real good*

*Continued on page 8*

## 2004 crow perspectives on U.S. election

speech after those airplane attacks, and you Humans needed a good speech right then. Then he went after that Osama, *who* sure is an Owl."

I was baffled. "Owl? Like in 'wise old owl?' Bin Laden?"

"Only foolish Humans think Owls are wise. To a Crow, 'Owl' means 'evil son of a ...

"But your Bush didn't follow through. Invaded Afghanistan and all, disrupted Osama's outfit, scattered the Taliban. But then didn't finish the job. Got all distracted with this Iraq stuff. Went after Saddam instead.

"Now Saddam's quite the Owl himself. But he was also the sworn enemy of Osama's bunch and those Taliban loonies.

"If a Crow sees two Owls fighting, he lets them. Another sign of Crow superiority."

"So you're saying Kerry would do better?"

"Who knows? But at least Kerry's seen a war. I figure he knows how serious it is. Bush seems to think it's a video game. Hit all the targets. Double bonus score. Mission accomplished.

"But he forgot about level two. Winning the peace. Electricity's still out. Water still out. Sewers still backed up. Buildings still rubble. And no work.

"So you got a bunch of hot, dirty, tired, bored and frustrated men. Broke, unemployed, and they got lots of guns. Add in a few religious fanatics who want power. Wouldn't call that a recipe for peace and stability."

"So the Crows are for Kerry? I asked.

"Your Human wars don't mean a lot to Crows, as long as the war is somewhere else. The Crows in Iraq aren't happy, that I know. Wars bring hard times and poverty. When Humans get hungry they don't throw out much food. Bad for Crows."

"So a good economy is good for Crows," I said. "Which candidate are the Crows backing as far as the economy goes?"

"No consensus. We're debating that one a lot. Things aren't that dire for Humans in the U.S.

"Some Crows say if the economy improves, humans will throw more food away. That's good. But Humans are neater when things are going well. That means less litter. That's bad.

"When things are good, Humans drive larger vehicles. And they drive faster. More road kill. That's good. But more

Crows hit on the highway. That's bad.

"Better Human economy means more humans with leisure time. Some Humans use leisure time to shoot at Crows. That's bad. But it also means more amateur hunters. They miss a lot. And that's good.

"To me it's a wash," he concluded.

"Well, we Humans want a good economy, so who should we vote for?"

"Figure it out. Forget all the talk. Ignore all the promises. These are politicians, after all. Focus on the reality. Are you better off now than four years ago? Then vote for Bush. Are you getting the short end of the tax breaks? Job shipped overseas? Then vote for Kerry."

"So you Crows don't care who wins the Human election."

"Didn't say that. It matters. Humans tend to make a big poisonous mess where ever they go. We Crows have smaller bodies with higher metabolism, so Human pollution is extra hard on us.

"Bush isn't much interested in cleaning up pollution. Before, things were getting a little cleaner every year. Not since Bush took over. Kerry has a better record.

"We Crows talk about this a lot, but we can't figure you humans out. You all talk about how much you care about your children, so think a little. Which Humans have smaller bodies and higher metabolism?"

"And you like a good economy. Well, the environment is part of the economy. But you don't seem to know that. You greed heads think pollution is cheaper. It's really more expensive in the long run. A lot more expensive.

"But I'm just wasting my time here. Thoughts. Words. Actions."

There it was that again. "And what's that supposed to mean?"

"It means I can only think and talk about your Human election. I can't vote in it. And it means you'd better. And may the Great Crow Spirit save us all."



Evon Zerbetz of Ketchikan, Alaska, writes that her exhibition: *Raucous! Everything Raven* is at the Alaska State Museum in Juneau through Oct. 11. From there she will take the exhibition to Lancaster, Pa., to the North Museum of Natural History and Science, Oct. 30, 2008, to Jan. 18, 2009. Her announcement card above features *Raven Wheel IV: Steel Wheel*, mixed media. The exhibition in Juneau opened in April and photos from the opening are online <http://www.evonzerbetz.com/newstuff.html> Over the years, Zerbetz has generously permitted the Chronicle to publish her work.



## INSPIRED BY JACKDAWS

March 6, 2008

Dear ASCAR people

I would like to ask you to add me as a member of the ASCAR.

I think I always had an eye for Corvids, but the last five or six years my eyes were *really* opened. Thanks to the books of a Belgian author, Achilles Cools, who wrote a couple of wonderful books about Jackdaws. These books led me into the true world of Corvid! I don't know if they are available in English, but their Dutch names are: *De Kauwentuin* and *Kauwen in de Spiegel*. (Kauw is the Dutch name for Jackdaw.)

Since then I've learned much about the sheer intelligence of Crows via internet and (even better) much more through a lot of incredible English books on Crows and Ravens. (thank you, Amazon) I don't have to tell you which books they are because many of them are listed on the ASCAR Website.

I work for a tea company in The Netherlands. Besides that I draw cartoons and do some illustrating. Nothing big, on a (very) small basis. Maybe something to remember if needed/given time for the Corvi Chronicle.

I would be honored if you'd add me to the Corvi list and even more if given a Corvi # -- *Corvi 1003, Fryslan, The Netherlands*

EDITOR'S NOTE: We found a Website for Achilles Cools, artist, sculptor and writer, whose 1992 book *Kauwen in de Spiegel* translates as *Jackdaw in the Mirror*, according to the internet translation. <http://www.achillescools.be/>

## SLOPPY LATIN

April 8, 2008

Sir (Corvus 67):

Congratulations on the latest edition, especially the 1914 Corvi Stories, including the wistful Editor's Note. I always look forward to your witty and pithy commentary and letters.

I must, however, as a once junior high school student of Latin, remind you again that while your name, Corvi Chronicle, is proper Latin, your signature is not. Two corvi, but one corvus. You, and your correspondents should correct your sloppy Latin and begin referring to ourselves individually and appropriately, in the



Illustration by Jim Haynes #254

## LETTERS



Summertime on the Old Crow sent by Corvi 504 who says they take their crows seriously on the Damariscotta River in Maine

Latin singular. Of course it is possible, one supposes, to read 'corvi' not as the plural of corvus, but as a newly coined term of your own invention, referring solely to those of your immediate readership. If that be the case, I might suggest 'corvid' as perhaps a better salutation.

Always hopeful of being useful to your efforts toward furthering the spread of knowledge concerning corvidae, I am enclosing a small reward for you to use as you choose – and in the hope that you will continue to keep me on file. "We are not alone." – *Corvus 129, Gulf Breeze, Fla.*

## 1914 ARTICLE

April 20, 2008

I enjoyed the Corvi Chronicle even more than usual due to the 1914 article. I keep a close eye on our crows here

because West Nile virus has been found in our county. Fortunately I have not seen any effects. Our crows seem to be as numerous and raucous as ever. -- *Corvi ??, Fulks Run, Va.*

## CORVID ADAPTATION

April 1, 2008

I'm passing on news of typical corvi behavior that I find amusing. The short letter titled "Destructive Crows" was printed in a local weekly newspaper published for a senior community. Unfortunately the senior author did not find the corvi etiquette amusing.

### DESTRUCTIVE CROWS

I know it is the time for the birds to build nests. But I have a problem; the crows have destroyed my \$200 car cover by pecking holes and ripping pieces of my cover for their nests. Is there anything I can put on the cover to keep them away? [letter to editor from Del Lago East, Calif.]

The letter illustrates how crows have adapted to what the human world provides and take advantage of things they can use. Such as nesting materials. We see a car cover as protection for a car, but a crow sees it as excellent lining for its nest. Ah, the clever crow strikes again. -- *Corvi 7911, Laguna Woods, Calif.*

## FLEDGLING VISITS

April 12, 2008

Dear Corvi #67

Here is a contribution. I greatly enjoy the erudite newsletter! As I write, my local neighborhood crows are at my feeder. They are nesting in my brother's tree, about a block away. It's fun when they bring the new fledglings over in early June. I look forward to a great year for "my" crows! – *Corvi 295, Nevada, Iowa*



T-shirt design

ASCAR  
T-Shirts & mugs

for ordering information, sizes, colors available & cost, please call or write: Corinne Ovadia



Mug design

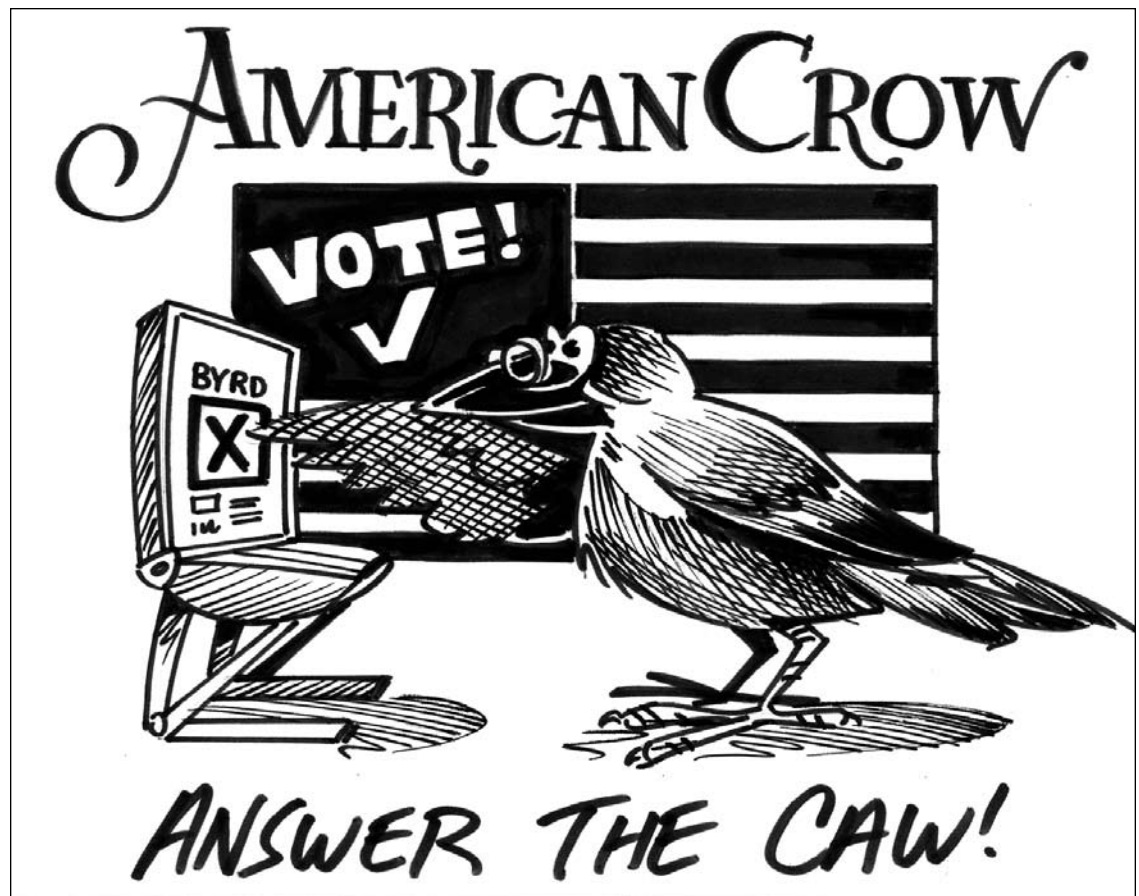
390 Merlin Springs Lane  
Floyd VA 24091  
(540) 745-7474  
[corinne99@aol.com](mailto:corinne99@aol.com)

Proceeds go to Corvi Chronicle

The accompanying sketch (created and contributed by Jim #254 Haynes) reminds us of our civic duties this election year.

However, discharging these duties has become increasingly difficult in this evolving political era. The

Chronicle has prepared a section beginning on page 1 as a guide to assist ASCAR members who may be working their way through the current political thicket.



### ANSWER THE CAW!

Sketch by Jim Haynes #254 of Silver Spring, Md.

#### CORVI CHRONICLE

American Society of Crows and Ravens  
Kaw River Valley Roost  
Box 1423  
Lawrence KS 66044-8423